

Oldbury Hill Woodland Management Plan Summary 2022-2032

Compartment O4c

National
Trust

**59.45 hectares of mixed
woodland in Kent**



Habitats and Species

Most of this woodland is of recent secondary origin, having developed over former heathland. The fact that much of the woodland on this site is ancient makes it of particular interest. The composition of the woodland varies considerably: towards the north and east of the site sessile oak *Quercus petraea* coppice is widespread with beech *Fagus sylvatica* and sessile oak standards.

The ground flora reflects the acidic nature of the soils: bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* is often dominant in the north of the site, whilst bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is abundant to the south-east.

Two plants found are heath dog-violet *Viola canina* which is rare in Kent and climbing corydalis *Corydalis claviculata* which is scarce in Kent.

The woodland supports an outstanding assemblage of lower plants, particularly fungi with over 250 recorded species including 10 species which are regarded as rare or scarce in Britain. Of these, two are considered to be species predominantly of the Scottish Highlands: *Collybia distorta* and *Suillus fluryi*. Of the mosses found on the site many are associated with the outcrops of Oldbury stone, a hard siliceous sandstone. Species of interest include a sandrock speciality *Calypogeia integristipula*, a species associated more with Western Britain *Scaparia umbrosa* and the rare *Lophocia ventineosa var confertifolia*.

The combination of ancient woodland, heathy vegetation and sandy soils supports a characteristic range of invertebrates. Amongst the bees and wasps recorded is a colony of the solitary bee *Andrena lapponica* found here at the only locality known for this species in Kent. It is considered to be a northern species and forages particularly on bilberry blossom. Many of the invertebrates are restricted to ancient woodland sites including two species of mollusc.

(Source – SSSI Citation, Natural England)

Designations

All of the woodlands at Oldbury sit within the Kent Downs AONB.

All of the woodlands here sit within Oldbury and Seal Chart SSSI, designated for the outstanding assemblage of fungi present, numbering over 250 species and including several that are rare or scarce in Britain. Characteristic communities of invertebrates and bryophyte mosses and liverworts also occur.

The woodlands are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument due to the large multivallate hillfort and Palaeolithic rock shelters present.

A number of compartments have been designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands (ASNW), this means it is a woodland that has existed continuously since or before 1600. In these compartments work will focus on maintaining and enhancing the health and diversity of the woodland habitat, protecting veteran trees, and management for health and safety.

Compartment O3b and O4a are classified as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), this is a result of the planting of Scots Pine into these woodlands. In this compartment we will seek to restore and protect the woodland's natural characteristics and features.

Management Approaches

Areas of semi-natural woodlands in good condition with no issues will be managed with little or no intervention

The importance of ancient and semi-natural woodland and veteran trees will be recognised due to their value for wood decay and epiphyte communities. Veteran trees will be identified and protected from competition for light from adjacent trees through targeted thinning and selective felling.

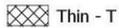
Where thinning or selective felling takes place, regeneration will be achieved through natural processes where possible. This includes allowing natural regeneration from seed or management to encourage coppice regrowth.

Coppicing will be used to maintain and enhance structural diversity

Thinning will open up areas of closed canopy woodland allowing better development of ground flora and natural regeneration of native trees.

Legend

Activity

-  Coppice - FC
-  Selective Fell - SF
-  Thin - T

Phase

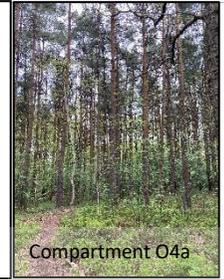
-  1 (First 5 Years)
-  2 (Second 5 Years)
-  LTR
-  Water

Selective felling will be used to release veteran trees from competition



Compartment O1b

Selective felling will be used to reduce the non-native tree component of ancient woodland areas



Compartment O4a

Thinning will be used to open up the canopy, allowing more light to reach the forest floor and promoting healthy growth and development of the remaining trees



Compartment O3b

Areas of semi-natural woodlands in good condition with no issues will be managed with little or no intervention

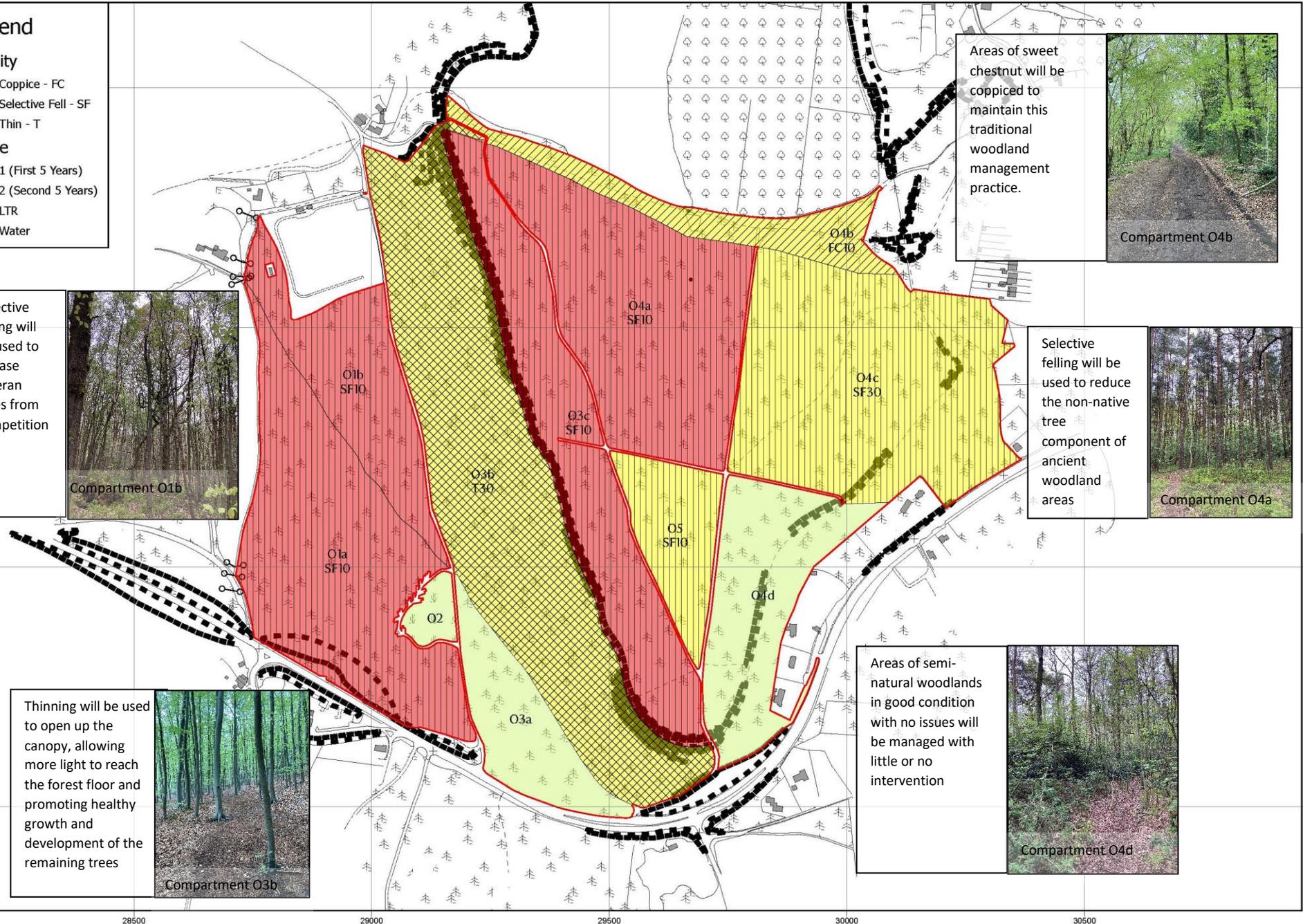


Compartment O4d

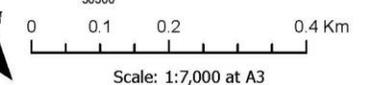
Areas of sweet chestnut will be coppiced to maintain this traditional woodland management practice.



Compartment O4b



MESK Woodland Management Plan - Oldbury Hill - Activity and work phase



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